

JANUARY

1975

AT THE
CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

TO THE
1975 ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE OF
THE ACADEMY

Wednesday evening, January 8
7:30 to 10:00 p.m.

Join us in relieving the post-Holiday doldrums by examining not only the public areas generally available to all visitors but by going "behind the scenes" into the research and other departments, not to mention a "backstage" look at the workings of Steinhart Aquarium. Programs will be furnished and members of the Docent Council will be on hand to aid and assist.

Your membership card is your admission through the main entrance, Cowell Hall. If you bring a guest, please have ready a completed guest ticket usually used at the monthly meetings.

MORRISON PLANETARIUM

"THE CHRISTMAS STAR" closes in the Theatre of the Stars January 5. Beginning January 9:

"QUEEN OF THE TWILIGHT", a sky show devoted to the planet Venus. This plays through March 16. Performances daily at two with evening shows, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday at eight. Extra matinees on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays at 3:30.

"LASERIUM" continues as the featured special attraction on weekends. This "Cosmic Light Concert Under the Stars" is presented on Fridays at 7:30, 9:00 and 10:30 p.m., Saturdays at 4:45, 7:30, 9:00 and 10:30 p.m., and on Sundays at 4:45 and again at 9:30. Advance tickets at \$2.50 each are available at Bay Area Seating Service outlets (Pacific Stereo stores, Discount Record stores, and Montgomery Ward) and at the Academy box-office at the time of performance. For the regular planetarium show, prices are as usual: Adults, \$1.00, with half-price for 17 and under.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

"THE GENIUS OF BENIAMINO BUFANO", the most comprehensive exhibit ever mounted of works by this singular artist, will continue indefinitely in Lovell White Hall of Man and Nature and adjacent areas. Sculptures, mosaics, graphics and paintings (many never before exhibited) comprise a breath-taking collection which is sure to attract world-wide interest. Don't miss it — and inform your interested friends. No extra charge for this display.

"CETACEA", devoted to marine mammals, continues in Cowell Hall.

"EGGS, OEUFS, AND AEPYORNIS", in Cowell also, includes a whopper of an egg — that of the Elephant Bird of Madagascar. Continues through January.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF MONTHLY ACADEMY MEETINGS:

February 12-13, March 12-13, and April 9-10

News and Notes

Two paleontologists, a man and wife team with close Academy connections, created widespread interest with their report in the November issue of "The Journal of Paleontology." The scientists involved are J. Wyatt Durham of the University of California (and past President of the Academy) and his wife, Jean B. Firby, a paleontologist on the Academy staff. The two spent six years searching a remote California mountain region — the upshot being the discovery of some tiny fossilized teeth from prehistoric cuttlefish which will help scientists move the evolutionary scale back about 100 million years.

Durham/Firby are of the belief that highly developed predatory invertebrates existed as early as 600 million years ago. Current evidence can date such creatures only as far back as 500 million years.

The fossils were found in the White Mountains near Bishop, California, embedded in rock from the early Cambrian Age.

RECENT SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

PROCEEDINGS

"A New Genus of North American Scorpions with a Key to the North American Genera of Vaejovidae (Scorpionida: Vaejovidae)." Stanley C. Williams. Vol. XL, No. 1. Oct. 30, 1974.75c

"The Genus *Cercidium* (Leguminosae: Caesalpiniodeae) in the Sonoran Desert of Mexico and the United States." Annetta M. Carter. Vol. XL, No. 2. Oct. 30, 1974.\$2.25

"The Comparative Morphology of Extrinsic Gas-bladder Musculature in the Scorpionfish Genus *Sebastes* (Pisces: Scorpaenidae)". Leon E. Hallacher. Vol. XL, No. 3. Oct. 30, 1974.\$1.25

"A New Genus and Species of Eublepharine Gecko (Sauria: Gekkonidae) from Baja California, Mexico." Robert W. Murphy. Vol. XL, No. 4. Oct. 30, 1974. 50c

NOTE: For those interested, papers published in the Proceedings and Occasional Papers are now available in microform from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

The Spring 1975 adult education classes brochure was put into the mail just before Christmas. If yours did not reach you, please call the Education Office at 221-5100 or 221-4214 for a replacement.

On your next trip to the CAS, step to the entrance of the Hall of Minerals and examine the four marvelous thin, thin slices of purple tourmaline mounted on brass fittings. From the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar), they were donated to the Academy by good friend Victor J. ("Trader Vic") Bergeron.

Dr. Welton Lee, Chairman, Department of Invertebrate Zoology, has been informed of a substantial National Science Foundation grant to initiate work on "The Systematics of Benthic Polychaete Fauna of San Francisco Bay". The work is one part of a three-phase program (The San Francisco Bay Program) now underway.

The program was initiated in 1973 by Dr. Lee and is directed toward the establishment of a complete reference collection of invertebrates from San Francisco Bay and the Bay Delta, the compilation of a complete bibliographic file, and the formation of a series of illustrated and annotated keys to the Bay fauna.

The entire project will be of immense benefit to local environmental studies. Personnel involved are Dr. Lee, Mr. William Light, also of the CAS department, and Dr. Frederick Nicholls of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

"Please" and "Thank You" have not disappeared completely from human communication. Many young visitors comprising a school class often express their appreciation for an Academy field trip by writing appreciative letters. A recent batch, addressed respectfully to Dr. John McCosker of Steinhart Aquarium, is an example. With no intention to poke fun nor malign, herewith some notes as received: "I like the poisonous frog and the dinosaur. I like you too. I will come back. Lori." "Thank you for letting me come to the Aquarium. I liked the Alligators. I liked the tarantula. I like the Dolphones. I liked the fish. I like fish to eat. I was very nice field trip. I like the turtle. Britt". "I like you very much, you are

very nice. The sea horses I like best. Gregory". "Thank you for letting as in free. Mike." And then the sad, sad capper: "Dear Dr. McCosker. I could not come because I forgot my field trip notice. Sincerely, Jeff".

Travel Note: BAJA CALIFORNIA SYMPOSIUM, February 1, from 9:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. At this time the Academy is holding a day-long symposium in connection with the Baja California members' trip February 14-21. Armchair travelers are welcome at \$10 per person. Limited reservations may be made by mail through the Education Office.

MEET THE STAFF



LEVELLE ALDERSON, Supervisor, Security Guards, became a United States Marine three weeks after he graduated from San Francisco Mission High School. This was in 1966 and took care of the next three and one-half years of his life. Two and one-half were spent in Vietnam working with heavy equipment and supply units and being what the Marines call a "grunt" or rifle carrier. Off-duty, he went in for amateur boxing. Fortunately, he came out of the Marine Corps unscathed and returned home in February 1970, spent an additional six months with the military, and was then discharged from Camp Pendleton in southern California. He took a well-deserved Bay Area holiday for another six months and was then employed by the Academy as a guard. In the intervening years he has worked himself into his present position of responsibility.

His time is filled to the brim since he is attending Skyline College in San Bruno where he plans on majoring in music and receiving a degree in about three years. Currently he is taking lessons on the banjo. He enjoys motor biking, hiking, camping and photography. He hies himself in his mini-bus to the wine country whenever time permits.

One incident during a work day would have soured a lesser person of the human race. Levelle recovered and returned a purse containing \$1300 in cash plus two valuable diamond rings to a lady who had reported them lost. She identified herself and the purse, took it, turned, and without a fare-thee-well or thank you, vanished into the crowd. "But the people who come here are really nice," he says, "and it's a pleasure to be of service."

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CALIFORNIA ACADEMY
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